

Indiana Systems of Care Expansion Planning Grant Processes
Pinkie Evans, MBA, MSW, LSW & Betty A. Walton, PhD, LCSW
Indiana University School of Social Work
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Abstract

Indiana received a federal system of care (SOC) expansion planning grant to implement and sustain SOC statewide, supporting access to effective services and supports for young people with mental health needs. State and local SOC include families and youth, child mental health, addiction service and other child service providers, child welfare, education, and advocates. The presentation describes related research processes including the instrument selection, adaptation of a self-assessment tool, the use of quantitative research techniques, and data analysis.

Participatory research processes were used to select a self-assessment survey instrument, to refine the tool while maintaining validity, and to collect data from the survey and regional focus groups. The poster includes some challenges of participatory research and solutions to the challenges, including ongoing communication with team members.

A cross-system evaluation team (Indiana Department of Child Services and Indiana University School of Social Work) reviewed ten readiness-for-change assessment tools considering these criteria: (1) standardized, research based tool, (2) feasibility, (3) inclusion of SOC values and principles, (4) infrastructure components, and (5) readiness to change measures. After narrowing the options to three instruments, local and state SOC partners selected the Systems of Care Implementation Survey (SOCIS) based on the criteria and availability of research related to the tool. With permission from the SOCIS developers, the survey was adapted for state use.

Findings: Regional family focus group themes highlight the need for increased public and family knowledge about mental health and mental illness; coordination among mental health providers, child welfare, schools, and families; access to care (funding and location challenges); and developing the workforce. Preliminary SOCIS findings include a description of respondents' roles (perspectives). Survey ratings differ across characteristics of respondents, identifying possible disparities that are not reflected in mean scores for SOCIS Factors.

Discussion: SOCIS surveys and focus group results are being used to help create a strategic plan to develop and sustain SOC infrastructure at the state and local levels. For quality improvement initiatives, county level survey results will be classified using US Census data and compared with results of a national study of over 200 developing SOC sites by county size and poverty levels. We will compare current survey results to a similar past Indiana local SOC assessments, and use the SOCIS in future years to monitor progress. This process is a good example of translating research into practice.